



With over 2.3 million visits in 2017, Strathcona County's public facing website, strathcona.ca, provides a central point of reference and access to information and services to residents, business and administration.

The number of sessions is up 200,000 from last year.

In Strathcona County's spring 2017 public survey, 78 per cent of respondents said they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the website.

We look closely at what these statistics tell us about how our residents use the website, to guide decisions on content placement, layout and navigation.



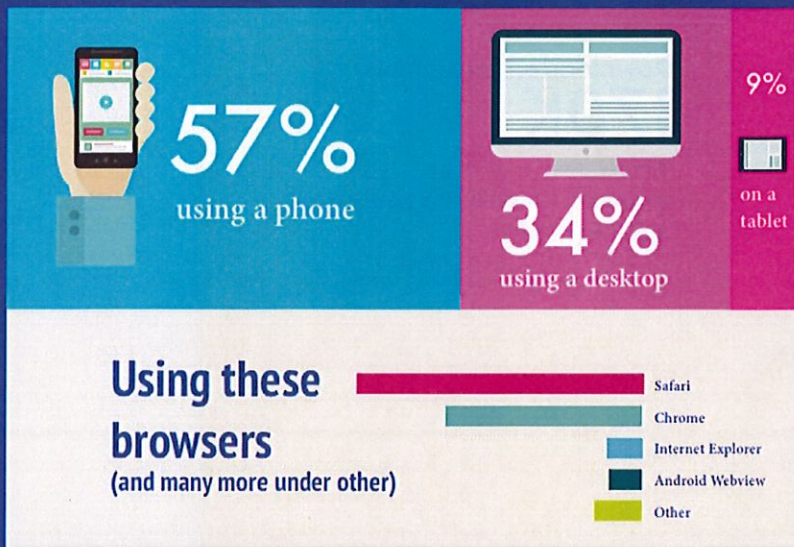
There has been a continuous increase in the number of sessions, as we make the website the hub of our Communications program.

Our digital presence is the result of a collaborative effort between all departments. We operate in a distributed content editing model, empowering department subject matter experts to make updates to their content. Communications provides training, support and guidelines.

This same approach applies to our social media presence.

In 2017, we partnered with Information and Technology Services to take over website hosting. We have seen an improvement in server uptime from 99.31 per cent to 99.95 per cent, as well as a faster server response times measured at 0.78 seconds in 2017 versus 1.12 seconds in 2016.

People outside our network viewed the website:



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Similarly, we see a continuous year-over-year increase of visitors relying on their phones to access the website instead of desktops and tablets. This is in line with industry trends.

With this information in mind, the new website was designed for phones first, then scaled up for desktops, in what industry calls a “mobile-first approach”.

We also need to be constantly reminding ourselves to edit our content with small screens in mind, keeping text very short and objective.

WHAT

visitors do on the website
excluding staff

Read FAQs
329K

Most often to learn about:
admission rates to recreation centres
bus routes information
recreation programs
Canada Day activities

Downloaded documents

170K

Mostly transit schedules,
recreation schedules, the waste calendar
and the printable
map of Strathcona County

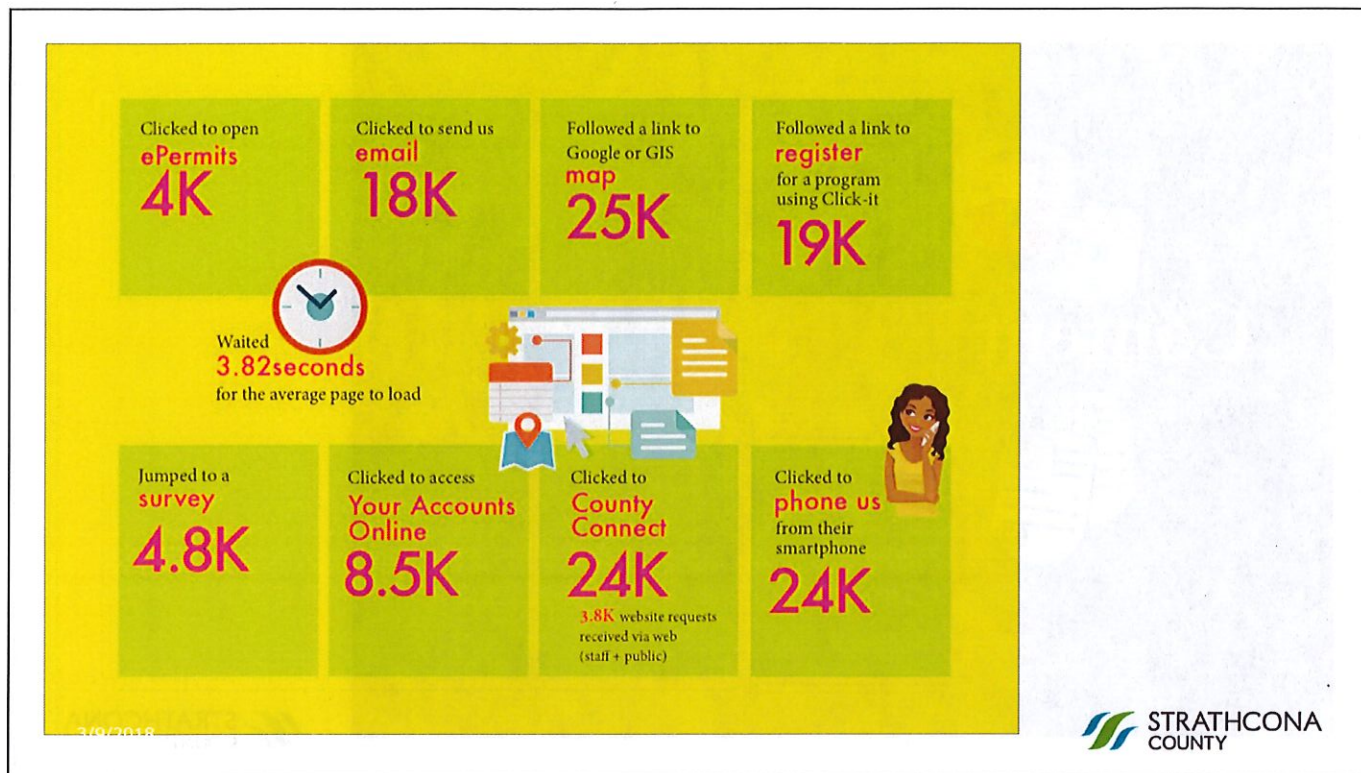
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We are also interested in learning why users come to the website. In 2017, we noted that the PDF map of Strathcona County was one of the most downloaded documents, in addition to the traditional yearly top three: transit, recreation and waste schedules.

From 2016 to 2017, visitors read almost three times more FAQs.

We have been providing more information in this format, converting from long pages to smaller bits of information that users can expand to read. This format allows us to measure, in a given page, the exact information residents are looking for, and better understand what we need to communicate. It also allows us to group more information together in one page, increasing the chances that residents will see the information they want to read.



Interactions with the website show that our residents use it to read about our services and to engage with us in their preferred method.

Through the site, there were over 18,000 clicks to send an email and 24,000 clicks to phone us from their smart phone.



Top Content



	Pageviews (in thousands)
Recreation, parks and culture	502
Careers and Human Resources	248
Transit	136
Utilities	114
News, events, contacts	64
Transportation and agriculture	49
Permits and planning	48
Assessment and tax	41
RCMP and enforcement	33
Family and communities	27

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Year over year our stats indicate that visitors' interests in content remained constant, with slight variations influenced by events. In 2017, we saw that the water bans brought more traffic to Utilities-related content than in previous years.

How people
arrive
at the website

75%

Of external visitors search
the web, primarily using google.

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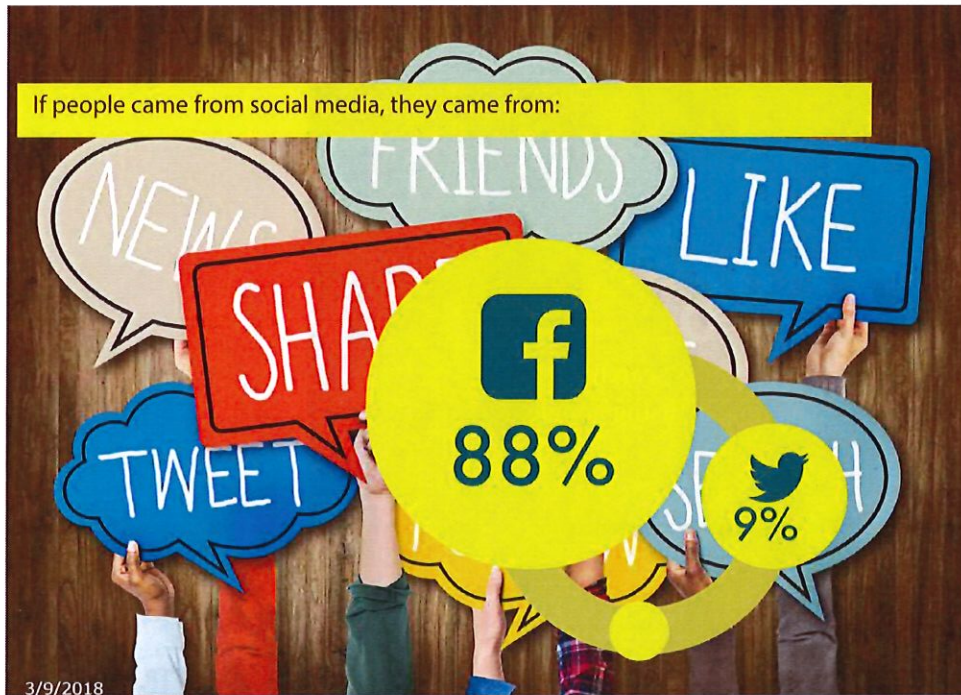
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Search is by far the most common method people use to arrive at the website, with 75 per cent of external visitors finding our content in this way. They land directly on the pages containing their search terms. Only 9 per cent of sessions, originating from search, land on the homepage.

Last year we have reported this number as 60 per cent; however, this year we excluded Wi-Fi login from the traffic sources. Typically, Wi-Fi users in our facilities will login as a means of moving to other websites.

With the recent website upgrade, Communications felt it crucial to ensure that Google search results still pointed users to the right content. And as a general rule, making sure Google finds our content is the number one priority, guiding website decision and guidelines.

If people came from social media, they came from:



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We typically use Twitter to connect with influencers and Facebook to connect with families. We engage in two-way communication in these channels.

Our social media efforts are predominantly organic (unpaid content) and serve a couple of needs, such as providing information or building a sense of community.

Social *by the* NUMBERS

9.6K Facebook page likes
(up from 8.9K in 2016, 7K in 2015)
323 posts

7K Twitter followers
(up from 6.4K in 2017, 5.5K in 2016)
1,066 tweets

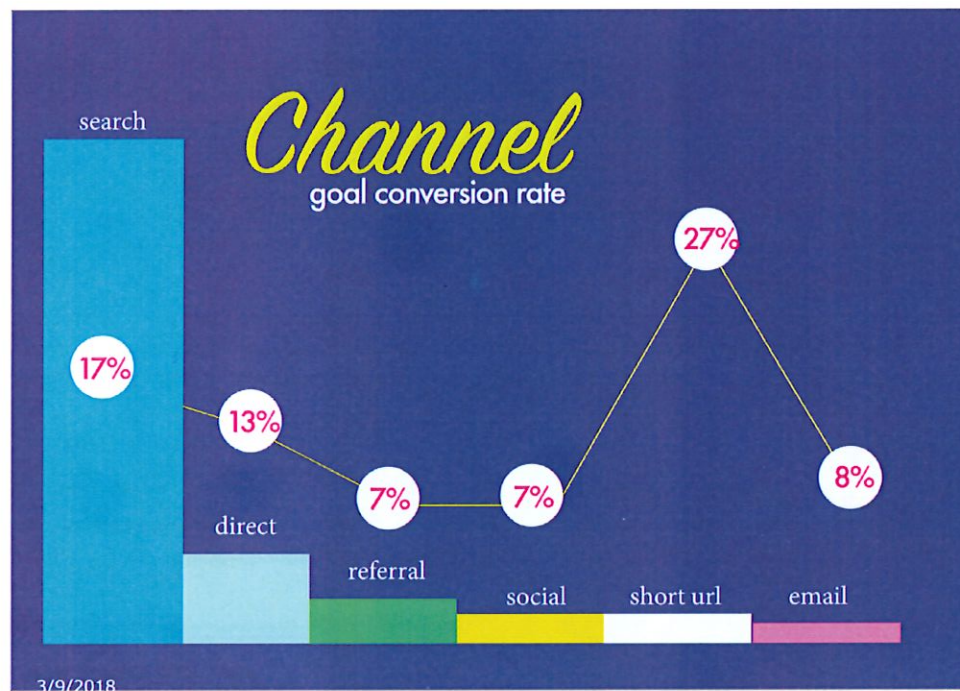
900 Instagram followers

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We monitor and respond to social media questions and complaints, and correct misinformation.

We reach many people through social media, with over 9,600 likes to our Facebook page (up from 8,900 in 2016) and 7,000 followers on Twitter (up from 6,400 in 2016). We began using Instagram in 2013 to establish a presence in this channel. We now have 900 followers and use the platform to reach a younger audience, in a much more casual voice than we use in other channels.

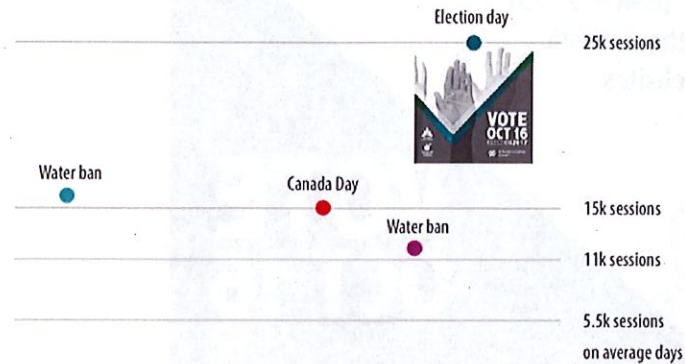


The goal conversion rate helps us understand which channels work best to get our visitors to take an action we want them to take, such as watching a video or downloading a brochure.

For example: the short web addresses we promote (e.g., strathcona.ca/scalerts) do not bring a large number of visitors to the website; however, this channel has the highest conversion rate. In plain terms, people who type strathcona.ca/scalerts are more prone to sign-up for alerts than those who hear about it on another website and follow a link (called the referral channel).

Events

that brought visitors
to the website *in 2017*



Planned and unplanned events also prompt our residents to turn to the website for information. Among the days with greater than average visits in 2017 we can highlight:

- Water ban early in the year
- Canada Day
- Water ban in September
- Election day

Election day in 2017 generated a lot of interest in the community, with almost five times the number of web visits on an average day.



Strathcona County's role in communicating about the 2017 election was to ensure that candidates knew how to participate in the process, and that voters knew when and where to vote, as well as where to find information about the candidates.

The website supported the communications campaign by providing a central location for voters to get ready to vote. Information included maps, ward information and links to candidates' websites.

The volume of views in 2017 more than doubled from what we measured in the 2013 election.

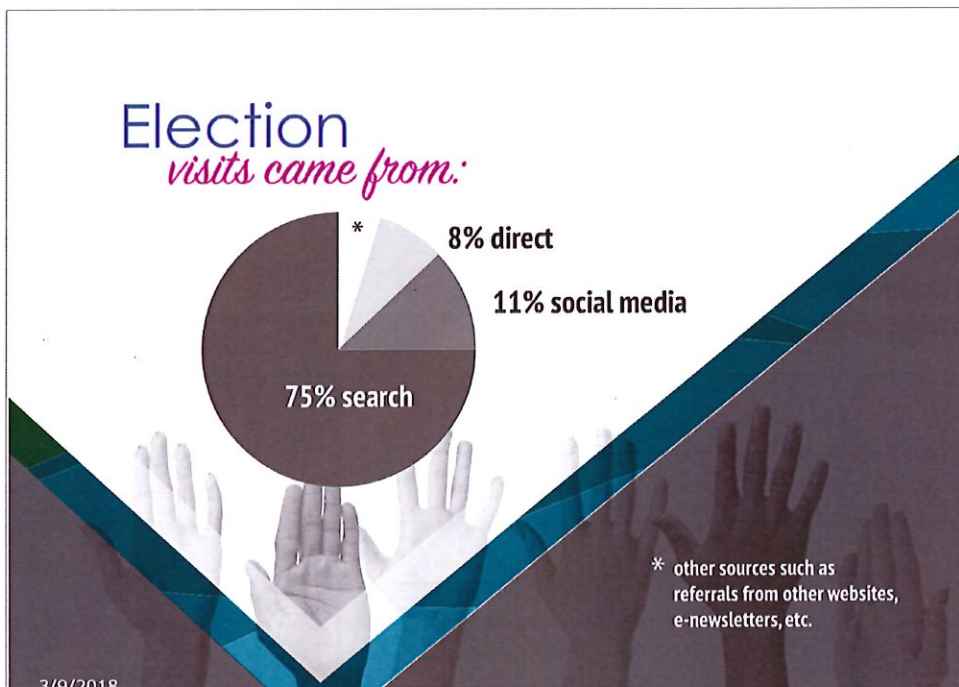
Website activity *on election day*

25K sessions (9K in 2013)
41K pageviews of election pages (26K in 2013)
62K pageviews website-wide



On election day alone, there were 25,000 sessions registered on the website -- five times more than an average day, and almost three times more than we experienced in the 2013 election day.

We're glad to say that the hosting provided by Information Technology Services was able to handle the traffic peak without experiencing server performance issues.



Visitors looking for information about the election came to the website primarily via search engines.

This could have been prompted by any of the promotion methods used in an extensive communications campaign that included print ads, road signs, engagement kits, stickers, bus signs, tweets, Facebook posts, videos, and posters.

Election *on Facebook*

11 posts - reach 86K people
5.5K interactions

WHY VOTE video
21K people reached
17K views

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On Facebook, the post that generated the most engagement was the Why Vote video, reaching over 21,000 people and generating 797 comments, shares or likes.

This video was one of the few posts 'boosted' by the County. This simply means that we paid to deliver the message farther, showing it on the news streams of people who do not follow the County on social media.

Election *on Twitter*

24 tweets - reach 52K people
2.2K interactions

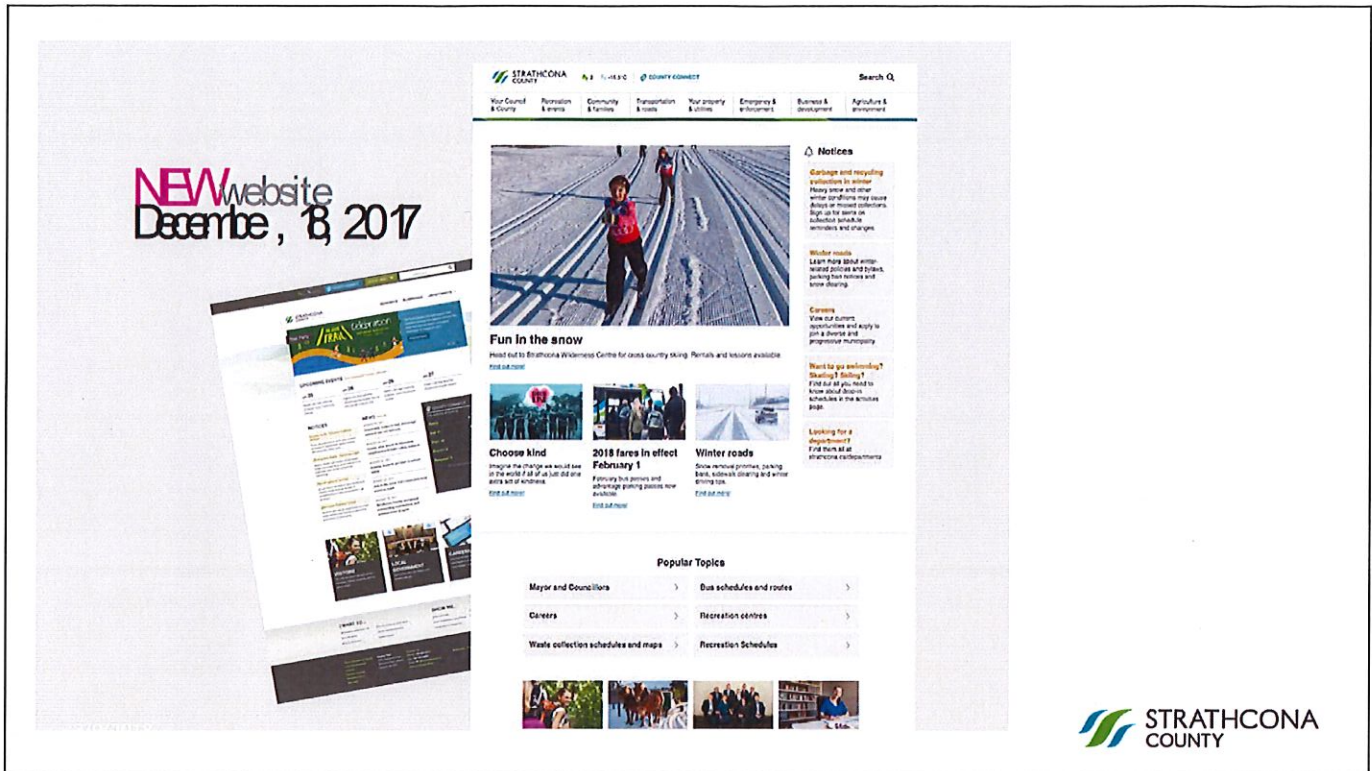
WHY VOTE *video*

2.6K video views
10K impressions

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We were able to reach over 52,000 people on Twitter. Again, the Why Vote video was very successful, generating over 2,600 views on twitter alone.



We used website analytics, combined with user testing, public engagement, benchmarking, department feedback and other industry tools to inform many aspects of the revised website.

As the year progresses, we will continue to monitor analytics and engage staff and residents to provide feedback on the new website, looking for opportunities to improve our residents' website experience.

